



# ENTERING THE NEW ERA OF E-GOVERNMENT

## ACSI E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX (Q4 2012)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This quarter's report on the ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index has four parts:

- > **Part 1:** Introduction: It's a New Decade, It's a New Dawn...It's a New E-Government.
- > **Part 2:** Measuring Mobile is the New Frontier in Citizen Satisfaction
  - One in three people reported having accessed ANY federal website using a mobile phone or tablet and recorded an average satisfaction score of 67.
  - Eighty-one percent of visitors who used a smartphone to access a federal government mobile site were slightly more satisfied than the thirty-six percent who used a tablet.
- > **Part 3:** Citizen Satisfaction: A quarterly update on citizen satisfaction with e-government at the aggregate level, including individual satisfaction scores for the 100 federal government sites participating in the Index. Key findings include:
  - **Though e-government had a solid 2012, not much has changed in terms of citizen satisfaction with the e-gov experience.** The year ended with a satisfaction score of 75 on the report's 100-point scale – the same score as every fourth quarter since 2009.
  - **Satisfaction with e-government outperforms satisfaction with government overall.** Year after year, the internet is proving to be the preferred channel for citizens to interact with the federal government. However, the gap is narrowing as satisfaction with the government is increasing and registers a score of 68.4.
  - **Satisfaction with e-gov rivals the satisfaction with private-sector sites.** Several government websites in this Index score the same or better than do some of the best and well-known private sector companies out there.

- **Why Satisfaction?** Highly satisfied citizens are 92% more likely to use the federal website as a primary resource; 92% more likely to recommend the site; 63% more likely to put their trust behind the agency; 54% more likely to return to the site; and 47% more likely to participate with the government in the future.
- **Search, Functionality and Transparency are the top-priority areas of improvement.** By using a scientific approach to measure e-government experiences through the eyes of the citizen, agency managers and government officials can determine areas of improvement that have the biggest impact on satisfaction.

## PART ONE

### INTRODUCTION: A NEW DECADE, A NEW DAWN...A NEW E-GOVERNMENT.

Welcome to a new decade – a new dawn – of measuring the citizen experience. Today's release of ForeSee's quarterly report of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Government Satisfaction Index takes a look at the past decade of measuring citizen satisfaction with public-facing federal agency websites.

Ten years ago in Q3 2003, when the ACSI started reporting citizen satisfaction with e-government, only 22 federal agency websites were measured. Now, more than 100 sites are included. This is great news as it shows more and more agencies are realizing the benefits of measuring citizens' web experiences.

However, moving to a more citizen-centric e-government does not come without challenges. Newer and more affordable technology puts more information at the citizen's fingertips, giving them a variety of ways to interact with the government, which greatly increases their expectations. This is rapidly changing the face of e-government and how it does business with the public.

With the release of its *Digital Government: Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve the American People* initiative in May 2012, a new e-government is emerging – one that highlights the importance of understanding its customers and how they interact with the government.

The maturity of the mobile channel makes it especially challenging for public (and private) sector entities to stay ahead of the multi-channeling, multi-device-using public as mobile is both a standalone technology and a companion to other channels. The federal government acknowledges this and is addressing it head on. The Digital Government report sets milestones for federal agencies to both identify and optimize two existing priority customer-facing services for mobile use. Federal agencies are also tasked with publishing a plan for improving additional existing services by May 2013.

Although satisfaction with e-gov has been hovering near the Index's all-time high score of 75 (on the ACSI's 100-point scale) for the last few years, executive support like the Digital Government initiative may help ensure that agencies prioritize customer interaction through innovative and cost-saving channels like mobile and web. By measuring citizen satisfaction through these channels, agency leaders can ensure they are meeting the needs of the public.

In today's omni-channel world, agency managers and government officials need to understand that satisfaction isn't just about measuring an individual experience at an office location or with a contact center, website or mobile device. It's about every channel, every touch point, every device. Measuring every aspect of customer interaction is the only way to see the full picture. This way, agency leaders can see the warning signs, identify improvements, decide with certainty where to spend shrinking budgets, and decide where **NOT** to spend taxpayer money.

With satisfaction ranging from 75 to 75.6 for 13 of the last 14 quarters, now is not the time for e-government to sit back and rest on their laurels.

## PART TWO

### MEASURING MOBILE IS THE NEW FRONTIER IN CITIZEN SATISFACTION

Throughout 2012, federal government sites, such as Social Security's iClaim, consistently outperformed top private sector sites like Amazon.com and Google in customer satisfaction. This shows just how far the digital arm of the government has come in recent years. As a result of seeing the accomplishments of federal sites that are measuring the citizen experience the right way, more and more agencies are realizing it's not enough just to ask a series of questions and look at the answers without a proven, tested methodology.

Many agencies understand their customers' needs and what improvements will ensure those needs are continuing to be met online, but the next step – the next challenge – in citizen engagement is providing and measuring the mobile experience.

According to the Digital Government report, August 23, 2012 marked the first mobile implementation strategy deadline in which agencies were required to “engage with customers to **identify** at least two existing priority customer-facing services to optimize for mobile use.” Come May 2013, it is expected that agencies will “**optimize** at least two existing priority customer-facing services for mobile use and publish a plan for improving additional existing services.”

Some agencies are already well ahead of the new strategy. For this report, ForeSee took a closer look at 13 agencies in the early stages of measuring mobile. According to this study, mobile experiences with e-gov are decidedly less satisfying than those of their web counterparts.

Roughly half (48%) of visitors to federal websites reported ever using a mobile phone or tablet to access the internet, which is just slightly lower than the general population (Pew reports that in April 2012, 55% of adults used their phone to access the internet).

One in three people reported having accessed **ANY** federal website using a mobile phone or tablet and recorded an average satisfaction score of 67.

- > 15% said they haven't yet accessed a federal site using a mobile phone or tablet, but plan to. This group's satisfaction was 73.
- > 38% of respondents said they haven't accessed a federal site using a mobile phone, but might in the future. This group's satisfaction was 69.
- > 13% said they never have accessed a federal site using a mobile phone and don't plan to. This group's satisfaction was 60.

There appears to be a large number of people who either "plan to" or "might" visit federal government websites via a mobile device, which is a huge opportunity for agencies. Surging smartphone and tablet adoption suggests that more citizens will access government services via mobile devices. If government agency leaders listen to what the citizen wants in regards to a mobile experience, they can begin to foster relationships with these people and build an experience that will encourage citizens to return and recommend the site. This will also allow citizens to use the site as a primary resource over a more expensive channel, thus allowing them to save money when budgets are shrinking.

Visitors who accessed e-gov sites on a mobile device prefer smartphones to tablets. As tablet prices begin to drop, there could be a shift in device preference. Of those who visited federal government sites using their mobile device, visitors used Apple products more often than they used Android or other brands.

Device used:

- > 81% used a smartphone
  - 47% used an iPhone
  - 39% used an Android
  - 7% used a Blackberry
- > 36% used a tablet
  - 61% used an iPad
  - 18% used an Android tablet
  - 11% used a Kindle

PART THREE

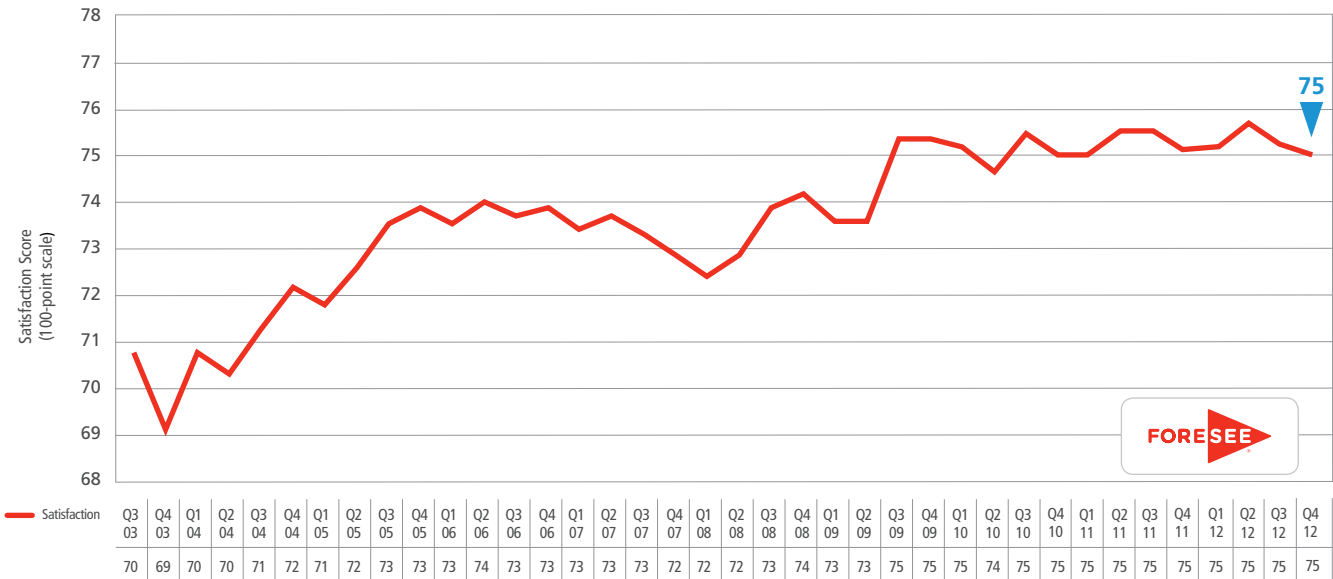
SATISFACTION WITH THE ONLINE EXPERIENCE OUTPERFORMS OVERALL FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION

Along with the Q4 2012 E-Government Satisfaction Index, which measures satisfaction specifically with the online channel, the ACSI also released the 2012 U.S. Federal Government Report, which measured citizen satisfaction with agencies and departments overall. While satisfaction with the overall federal government increased for the second year in a row (from 66.9 in 2011 to 68.4 in 2012), the online experience (satisfaction of 75) continues to be the preferred way for citizens to engage with federal agencies.

E-Gov vs. Overall Gov	Aggregate Satisfaction Score
E-Government Q4 2012	75.0
Overall Government Q4 2012	68.4



# ACSI E-GOVERNMENT INDEX (Satisfaction By Quarter) 2003 - 2012



The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a comprehensive reflection of the citizen experience with federal government websites, and is a critical checkpoint for evaluating the success and performance of the federal government’s online initiatives. Almost 250,000 responses were collected across 100 federal government websites for this fourth quarter Index. This demonstrates that citizens are willing and able to share their voice to help agencies and departments improve. The use of ForeSee technology and the ACSI methodology then enables agency leaders to determine which site improvements will have the greatest impact on future usage and recommendations.

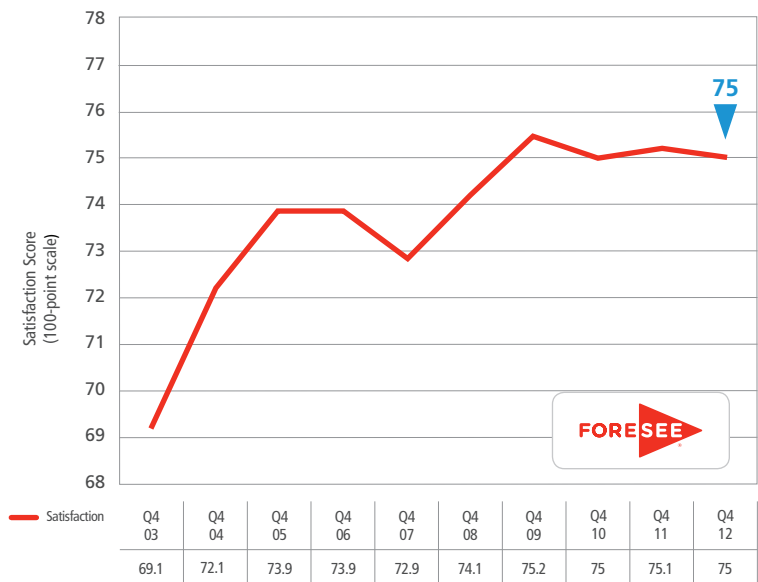


## SATISFACTION WITH E-GOVERNMENT REMAINS STEADY

Although e-government had a solid 2012, not much has changed in terms of citizen satisfaction with the e-gov experience. The year ended with a satisfaction score of 75 – similar to 13 of the last 14 quarters where satisfaction ranged from 75 to 75.6. The good news is there has not been a big decline in satisfaction, meaning citizen satisfaction is stable. The bad news, though, is that e-government satisfaction is stagnant and can only improve if government agencies commit to meeting and exceeding continuously rising citizen expectations.

Below is a 10-year historical look at Q4 satisfaction scores:

### ACSI E-GOVERNMENT INDEX (Q4 Satisfaction Scores) 2003 - 2012



Government agencies have an obligation to the public to be fiscally responsible with taxpayer money. Therefore, agency leaders need to maintain the highest online standards by meeting or exceeding citizen expectations, wants and needs. Federal websites that are already successfully meeting their users’ needs should take note of their achievements without letting their

guard down. As people’s expectations constantly change, agencies need to continuously look for new ways to improve the citizen experience in order to increase the likelihood that citizens will participate with government in the future, use their sites as a primary resource (rather than costlier channels such as branch locations and contact centers), and recommend the site to others.

## Q4 2012 ACSI E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX

The following table displays scores for all 100 participating federal websites in the E-Gov Satisfaction Index.

In later pages of the commentary, scores are shown by category for more specific benchmarking purposes.

Q4 2012 ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index		
Department	Website	Satisfaction
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator – <a href="http://ssa.gov/estimator">ssa.gov/estimator</a>	91
SSA	SSA iClaim – <a href="http://socialsecurity.gov/applyonline">socialsecurity.gov/applyonline</a>	90
SSA	Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs – <a href="http://socialsecurity.gov/i1020">socialsecurity.gov/i1020</a>	89
HHS	National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website – <a href="http://nhlbi.nih.gov">nhlbi.nih.gov</a>	87
HHS	MedlinePlus en Español – <a href="http://medlineplus.gov/esp">medlineplus.gov/esp</a>	87
HHS	MedlinePlus – <a href="http://medlineplus.gov">medlineplus.gov</a>	87
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center – <a href="http://uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship">uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship</a>	86
Boards, Commissions and Committees	American Battle Monuments Commission – <a href="http://abmc.gov">abmc.gov</a>	86
HHS	National Library of Medicine AIDS information – <a href="http://aidsinfo.nih.gov">aidsinfo.nih.gov</a>	84
HHS	HHS Healthy People – <a href="http://healthypeople.gov">healthypeople.gov</a>	84
SSA	Social Security Business Services Online – <a href="http://ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm">ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm</a>	84
DOC	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website – <a href="http://ngs.noaa.gov">ngs.noaa.gov</a>	83
SSA	SSA Electronic Access/Online Statement – <a href="http://ssa.gov/mystatement">ssa.gov/mystatement</a>	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute main website – <a href="http://cancer.gov">cancer.gov</a>	83
HHS	NIDDK – <a href="http://www2.niddk.nih.gov">www2.niddk.nih.gov</a>	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español – <a href="http://cancer.gov/espanol">cancer.gov/espanol</a>	83
SSA	Social Security Internet Disability Report – <a href="http://ssa.gov/applyfordisability">ssa.gov/applyfordisability</a>	83
PBGC	MyPBA – <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba</a>	83
HHS	CDC main website – <a href="http://cdc.gov">cdc.gov</a>	82
CIA	Recruitment website – <a href="http://cia.gov/careers">cia.gov/careers</a>	82
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website – <a href="http://womenshealth.gov">womenshealth.gov</a>	82
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services en Español – <a href="http://uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es">uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es</a>	82
Treasury	U.S. Mint Online Catalog and main website – <a href="http://usmint.gov">usmint.gov</a>	82
HHS	SAMHSA Store – <a href="http://store.samhsa.gov">store.samhsa.gov</a>	82
HHS	Girls Health – <a href="http://girlshealth.gov">girlshealth.gov</a>	82
DOS	Recruitment website – <a href="http://careers.state.gov">careers.state.gov</a>	82

## Q4 2012 ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index (continued from page 10)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
DOD	DoD Navy – navy.mil	82
NASA	NASA main website – nasa.gov	81
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis	81
DOD	DoD Air Force – af.mil	81
HHS	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development – nichd.nih.gov	81
DHS	Federal Emergency Management Agency Ready Campaign – ready.gov	81
DOJ	National Institute of Justice – nij.gov	80
DOI	National Park Service main website – nps.gov	80
HHS	National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research – nidcr.nih.gov	80
PBGC	MyPAA – https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa	80
HHS	NIAMS public website – niams.nih.gov	79
FTC	FTC OnGuardOnline – onguardonline.gov	79
DOJ	FBI main website – fbi.gov	79
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – uscis.gov/e-verify	79
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality – ahrq.gov	78
DOS	Bureau of Consular Affairs – travel.state.gov	78
GAO	GAO main public website – gao.gov	77
HHS	National Library of Medicine main website – nlm.nih.gov	77
DOL	Department of Labor Job Listings – doors.dol.gov	77
GSA	GSA main website – gsa.gov	77
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website – nrc.gov	76
DOD	Department of Defense portal – defense.gov	76
DOT	Federal Aviation Administration – faa.gov	76
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics – bls.gov	76
Courts	Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts – uscourts.gov	76
HHS	HHS National Health Information Center – healthfinder.gov	76
DOS	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs alumni website – https://alumni.state.gov	76
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website – nist.gov	75
USDA	ERS main website – ers.usda.gov	75
USDA	Recreation One-Stop – recreation.gov	75
HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration main website – hrsa.gov	75
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases – www3.niaid.nih.gov	74
SBA	SBA main website – sba.gov	74

## Q4 2012 ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index (continued from page 11)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation – fhwa.dot.gov	73
Treasury	Making Home Affordable – makinghomeaffordable.gov	73
HHS	National Library of Medicine Clinical Trials website – clinicaltrials.gov	73
OPM	Recruitment website – usajobs.gov	73
DOS	Department of State blog website – blogs.state.gov	72
PBGC	U.S. PBGC main website – pbgc.gov	72
DOI	U.S. Geological Survey – usgs.gov	72
USDA	FSIS main website – fsis.usda.gov	72
ITC	U.S. International Trade Commission main website – usitc.gov	72
HHS	U.S. Food and Drug Administration main website – fda.gov	71
FTC	FTC main website – ftc.gov	71
NARA	NARA main public website – archives.gov	71
DOS	Department of State main website – state.gov	71
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – epa.gov	70
VA	VA Main website – va.gov and myhealthva.gov	70
GSA	GSA Auctions – gsaauctions.gov	70
DHS	Department of Homeland Security main website – dhs.gov	69
FDIC	FDIC main website – fdic.gov	68
HHS	SAMHSA website – samhsa.gov	68
OPM	OPM Veterans Employment website – fedshirevets.gov	68
Treasury	IRS main website – irs.gov	67
DOC	BEA main website – bea.gov	67
USDA	NRCS website – nrcs.usda.gov	67
FDIC	FDIC Applications – www2.fdic.gov	66
Treasury	USTTB website – ttb.gov	66
SSA	Social Security Online: Frequently Asked Questions – ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov	66
SSA	Social Security Online (Main Website) – socialsecurity.gov	66
Treasury	Financial Stability – financialstability.gov	66
GSA	Official Site to Buy U.S. Government Property – govsales.gov	65
DOT	Federal Railroad Administration main website – fra.dot.gov	64
DOD	TRICARE – tricare.mil	64
Treasury	Treasury main website – treasury.gov	64
DOL	Disability – disability.gov	63

## Q4 2012 ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index (continued from page 12)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
DOC	U.S. Census Bureau main website – census.gov	62
DOT	DOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration website – rita.dot.gov	62
DHS	Federal Emergency Management Agency main website – fema.gov	61
USDA	Forest Service main website – fs.usda.gov	61
HHS	HHS – grants.gov	60
DOT	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration main website – fmcsa.dot.gov	60
GSA	General Services Administration GSAXcess – gsaxcess.gov	59
Treasury	TreasuryDirect – treasurydirect.gov	46



## TOP PERFORMERS

On the ACSI's 100-point scale, a satisfaction of score of 80 or higher is typically considered the threshold for excellence and can only be achieved if the organization is doing an outstanding job of meeting and exceeding citizen expectations. This quarter, 36% (36 sites) scored 80 or above. A score in this range is an exceptional achievement and shows that public sector sites can live up to, and in some cases exceed, expectations that are in large part shaped by the private sector.

## E-Gov Top Performers (Sites Scoring over 80)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator – ssa.gov/estimator	91
SSA	SSA iClaim – socialsecurity.gov/applyonline	90
SSA	Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs – socialsecurity.gov/i1020	89
HHS	National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website – nhlbi.nih.gov	87
HHS	MedlinePlus en Español – medlineplus.gov/esp	87
HHS	MedlinePlus – medlineplus.gov	87
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center – uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship	86
Boards, Commissions and Committees	American Battle Monuments Commission – abmc.gov	86
HHS	National Library of Medicine AIDS information – aidsinfo.nih.gov	84

**E-Gov Top Performers (Sites Scoring over 80)** (continued from page 13)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
HHS	HHS Healthy People – <a href="http://healthypeople.gov">healthypeople.gov</a>	84
SSA	Social Security Business Services Online – <a href="http://ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm">ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm</a>	84
DOC	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website – <a href="http://ngs.noaa.gov">ngs.noaa.gov</a>	83
SSA	SSA Electronic Access/Online Statement – <a href="http://ssa.gov/mystatement">ssa.gov/mystatement</a>	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute main website – <a href="http://cancer.gov">cancer.gov</a>	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español – <a href="http://cancer.gov/espanol">cancer.gov/espanol</a>	83
HHS	NIDDK – <a href="http://www2.niddk.nih.gov">www2.niddk.nih.gov</a>	83
SSA	Social Security Internet Disability Report – <a href="http://ssa.gov/applyfordisability">ssa.gov/applyfordisability</a>	83
PBGC	MyPBA – <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba</a>	83
HHS	CDC main website – <a href="http://cdc.gov">cdc.gov</a>	82
CIA	Recruitment website – <a href="http://cia.gov/careers">cia.gov/careers</a>	82
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website – <a href="http://womenshealth.gov">womenshealth.gov</a>	82
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services en Español – <a href="http://uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es">uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es</a>	82
Treasury	U.S. Mint Online Catalog and main website – <a href="http://usmint.gov">usmint.gov</a>	82
DOS	Recruitment website – <a href="http://careers.state.gov">careers.state.gov</a>	82
HHS	Girls Health – <a href="http://girlshealth.gov">girlshealth.gov</a>	82
HHS	SAMHSA Store – <a href="http://store.samhsa.gov">store.samhsa.gov</a>	82
DOD	DoD Navy – <a href="http://navy.mil">navy.mil</a>	82
NASA	NASA main website – <a href="http://nasa.gov">nasa.gov</a>	81
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – <a href="http://uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis">uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis</a>	81
DOD	DoD Air Force – <a href="http://af.mil">af.mil</a>	81
HHS	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development – <a href="http://nichd.nih.gov">nichd.nih.gov</a>	81
DHS	Federal Emergency Management Agency Ready Campaign – <a href="http://ready.gov">ready.gov</a>	81
DOJ	National Institute of Justice – <a href="http://nij.gov">nij.gov</a>	80
DOI	National Park Service main website – <a href="http://nps.gov">nps.gov</a>	80
HHS	National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research – <a href="http://nidcr.nih.gov">nidcr.nih.gov</a>	80
PBGC	MyPAA – <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa</a>	80

Two websites from the Social Security Administration (SSA), Retirement Estimator (91) and iClaim (90), lead the Index with the top overall scores and have outperformed all other private sector companies measured by the ACSI. Actually, a third SSA site (Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs) scored a 90 in Q2 2012, making these the only three sites (public or private) to ever break out of the 80s and into the 90s

Top E-Government Websites	Satisfaction	Top Private Sector Companies	Satisfaction
SSA Retirement Estimator – <a href="http://ssa.gov/estimator">ssa.gov/estimator</a>	91	Lincoln (Ford)	90
SSA iClaim – <a href="http://socialsecurity.gov/applyonline">socialsecurity.gov/applyonline</a>	90	H.J. Heinz	89
Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs – <a href="http://socialsecurity.gov/i1020">socialsecurity.gov/i1020</a>	89	Lexus (Toyota)	89
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website – <a href="http://nhlbi.nih.gov">nhlbi.nih.gov</a>	87	Subaru	87
MedlinePlus en Español – <a href="http://medlineplus.gov/esp">medlineplus.gov/esp</a>	87	Clorox	87
MedlinePlus – <a href="http://medlineplus.gov">medlineplus.gov</a>	87	Buick (GM)	87
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center – <a href="http://uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship">uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship</a>	86	Dr. Pepper Snapple	87
American Battle Monuments Commission – <a href="http://abmc.gov">abmc.gov</a>	86	Mars	86
National Library of Medicine AIDS information – <a href="http://aidsinfo.nih.gov">aidsinfo.nih.gov</a>	84	Cadillac (GM)	86
HHS Healthy People – <a href="http://Healthypeople.gov">Healthypeople.gov</a>	84	Del Monte	86

\*Top private sector website scores are from ACSI reports at [www.theacsi.org](http://www.theacsi.org). Each score was the most recent reported for that company at the time of publication of this Index.



## TOP GAINERS

Any time a company or, in this case, federal government agency shows a significant improvement in satisfaction (of three points or more) it should be noted as a success as it is sometimes difficult to keep pace with the ever-changing expectations of the citizen. These agencies show that they are definitely doing something right. Other agencies, whether in the same category or not, should take note as to how these top-performers are achieving this success.

The following charts demonstrate the agencies that have demonstrated the largest increase in citizen satisfaction from Q3 to Q4 2012 as well as the top gainers since the start of the Index.

#### E-Gov Top Gainers (Quarter-over-Quarter)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
DHS	FEMA	+10
DOI	USGS	+5
USDA	ERS	+4
GSA	GSA.gov	+3
HHS	HRSA	+3
USDA	NRCS	+3
HHS	NICHD	+3
HHS	NIDCR English	+3
HHS	Healthfinder	+3



#### E-Gov Top Gainers (Since Beginning)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
GSA	GSA.gov	+21
SSA	SSA Disability Report	+12
GAO	GAO	+11
USDA	Recreation.gov	+11
HHS	HRSA	+8
Treasury	USTTB	+8
DOD	DOD TRICARE MIL	+8
HHS	CDC	+8
ITC	USITC	+7
NRC	U.S. NRC	+7
NASA	NASA	+7
PBGC	PBGC My PAA	+7
HHS	SAMHSA Store	+6
PBGC	PBGC.gov	+6



**E-Gov Top Gainers (Since Beginning)** (continued from page 16)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
DOC	NGS NOAA	+6
HHS	FDA	+6
DOS	Careers.State	+6
USDA	NRCS	+5
USDA	FSIS	+5
HHS	HHS Grants	+5
HHS	MedlinePlus en espanol	+5
NARA	NARA	+5
HHS	NHLBI	+5
HHS	AHRQ	+5
HHS	NCI	+4
EPA	EPA	+4
Treasury	US Mint	+4
DOT	FAA Public Site	+4
DHS	USCIS	+4
HHS	Girls Health	+4
PBGC	MyPBA.gov	+3
DOJ	NIJ	+3
SSA	SSA BSO	+3
FTC	OnGuardOnline	+3
HHS	NLM	+3
SSA	SSA iClaim	+3



## SATISFACTION BY FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY

### PERENNIAL LEADER E-COMMERCE/TRANSACTIONAL SITES LEAD THE INDEX

In this report, federal government websites are organized by both functional category and organizational structure, allowing for benchmarking against peers. The functional categories include:

- > News and Information websites
- > Portals and Department main websites
- > E-commerce and Transactional websites
- > Career and Recruitment websites.

It is useful for a government website to benchmark its score against others in the same category rather than against the overall aggregate average, since missions can vary greatly among categories. It should be noted that because there are only four sites measured in the Career and Recruitment category, these are not included in the benchmark aggregate scores with the other categories. In order to provide the most accurate and precise data, at least five entities are required in each category. However, we do list individual scores of the sites in this category at the end of this section.

E-Commerce/Transaction sites led all categories again in 2012. While Portals/Department main sites and News/Information sites have at least remained consistent through the years, E-Commerce/Transaction sites have varied widely in the last decade with scores ranging from 73 in 2004 to 82 in 2009 to 77 in 2012.

## E-GOVERNMENT MAKES GAINS AGAINST THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Federal government websites have long lagged behind their private sector counterparts in customer satisfaction, but a recent slide for the e-business sector (which includes news and information and social media sites) breaks the trend. This quarter, e-government outperforms the private sector e-business category (74.2), but e-government is still far behind private sector e-commerce (which includes retail, brokerage and travel websites), which scored 80.1.

Federal news and information websites (75) score better on average than do the private sector news and information category (73) of the ACSI E-Business report. Meanwhile, e-government portals and department main sites (74) lag behind the private sector measure of portals and search engines (79).

## AGENCY/DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM SATISFACTION SCORES BY CATEGORY

Functional Categories over Time										
Category	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change Since Last Year
E-Commerce/Transaction (15 sites)	73	75	75	75	78	82	80	77	77	0%
Portals/Department Main Sites (33 sites)	72	74	75	73	75	75	75	75	74	-1%
News/Information (48 sites)	71	73	73	72	73	74	74	75	75	0%

\* This table reflects fourth quarter scores each year.



## Federal E-Commerce/Transactional Sites

E-commerce/Transactional sites remain at the top of the list, with a 77 – on par with Q4 2011, but a one-point drop from last quarter – with a range of 46 to 91. The Social Security Administration continues to set the bar high with six entities leading this chart. Two of the sites score in the 90s, outdoing every top-performing private sector e-commerce site measured by the ACSI, including Amazon.com.

The following chart shows the citizen satisfaction scores for all 15 of the federal government department sites in this category.

Federal E-Commerce/Transactional Sites		
Dept.	Website	Satisfaction
E-Commerce Aggregate Satisfaction		77
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator – <a href="http://ssa.gov/estimator">ssa.gov/estimator</a>	91
SSA	SSA iClaim – <a href="http://socialsecurity.gov/applyonline">socialsecurity.gov/applyonline</a>	90
SSA	Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs – <a href="http://socialsecurity.gov/i1020">socialsecurity.gov/i1020</a>	89
SSA	Social Security Business Services Online – <a href="http://ssa.gov/bsowelcome.htm">ssa.gov/bsowelcome.htm</a>	84
SSA	SSA Electronic Access/Online Statement – <a href="http://ssa.gov/mystatement">ssa.gov/mystatement</a>	83
SSA	Social Security Internet Disability Report – <a href="http://ssa.gov/applyfordisability">ssa.gov/applyfordisability</a>	83
PBGC	MyPBA – <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba</a>	83
Treasury	U.S. Mint Online Catalog and main website – <a href="http://usmint.gov">usmint.gov</a>	82
HHS	SAMHSA Store – <a href="http://store.samhsa.gov">store.samhsa.gov</a>	82
PBGC	MyPAA – <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa</a>	80
USDA	Recreation One-Stop – <a href="http://recreation.gov">recreation.gov</a>	75
GSA	GSA Auctions – <a href="http://gsaauctions.gov">gsaauctions.gov</a>	70
GSA	Official Site to Buy U.S. Government Property – <a href="http://govsales.gov">govsales.gov</a>	65
GSA	General Services Administration GSAXcess – <a href="http://gsaxcess.gov">gsaxcess.gov</a>	59
Treasury	TreasuryDirect – <a href="http://treasurydirect.gov">treasurydirect.gov</a>	46



Federal News/Information Sites

The news/information aggregate category score is 75 – the same as its Q4 2011 satisfaction score – with a 60 to 87 range.

Sixteen sites in this category are considered top performers (scoring 80 or higher). Both the English and Spanish versions of the MedlinePlus site lead this category with an 87. In just its second quarter in the Index, the American Battle Monuments Commission jumped two points to an 86, tying the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center in the second slot.

This category showed the largest number of agencies making a significant increase in their citizen satisfaction score (of three points or more) quarter over quarter. The biggest increase went to the U.S. Geological Survey to a 72 (a 5-point increase). The ERS main site increased its satisfaction score by four points to a 75, while four agencies (NRCS, 67; Health Resources and Services Administration, 75; National Health Information Center, 76; and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 81) all scored three points higher in the fourth quarter than they did the last.

The following chart shows the citizen satisfaction scores for all 49 of the federal government news and information sites.

Federal News/Information Sites		
Dept.	Website	Satisfaction
News/Information Aggregate Satisfaction		75
HHS	MedlinePlus en Español – medlineplus.gov/esp	87
HHS	MedlinePlus – medlineplus.gov	87
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center – uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship	86
Boards, Commissions and Committees	American Battle Monuments Commission – abmc.gov	86
HHS	National Library of Medicine AIDS information – aidsinfo.nih.gov	84
HHS	HHS Healthy People – healthypeople.gov	84

## Federal News/Information Sites (continued from page 21)

Dept.	Website	Satisfaction
DOC	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website – <a href="http://ngs.noaa.gov">ngs.noaa.gov</a>	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español – <a href="http://cancer.gov/espanol">cancer.gov/espanol</a>	83
HHS	NIDDK – <a href="http://www2.niddk.nih.gov">www2.niddk.nih.gov</a>	83
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website – <a href="http://womenshealth.gov">womenshealth.gov</a>	82
HHS	Girls Health – <a href="http://girlshealth.gov">girlshealth.gov</a>	82
DOD	DoD Navy – <a href="http://navy.mil">navy.mil</a>	82
DOD	DoD Air Force – <a href="http://af.mil">af.mil</a>	81
HHS	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development – <a href="http://nichd.nih.gov">nichd.nih.gov</a>	81
DHS	Federal Emergency Management Agency Ready Campaign – <a href="http://ready.gov">ready.gov</a>	81
DOJ	National Institute of Justice – <a href="http://nij.gov">nij.gov</a>	80
FTC	FTC OnGuardOnline – <a href="http://onguardonline.gov">onguardonline.gov</a>	79
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – <a href="http://uscis.gov/e-verify">uscis.gov/e-verify</a>	79
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality – <a href="http://ahrq.gov">ahrq.gov</a>	78
DOS	Bureau of Consular Affairs – <a href="http://travel.state.gov">travel.state.gov</a>	78
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website – <a href="http://nrc.gov">nrc.gov</a>	76
DOT	Federal Aviation Administration – <a href="http://faa.gov">faa.gov</a>	76
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics – <a href="http://bls.gov">bls.gov</a>	76
Courts	Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts – <a href="http://uscourts.gov">uscourts.gov</a>	76
HHS	HHS National Health Information Center – <a href="http://healthfinder.gov">healthfinder.gov</a>	76
DOS	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs alumni website – <a href="https://alumni.state.gov">https://alumni.state.gov</a>	76
USDA	ERS main website – <a href="http://ers.usda.gov">ers.usda.gov</a>	75
HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration main website – <a href="http://hrsa.gov">hrsa.gov</a>	75
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases – <a href="http://www3.niaid.nih.gov">www3.niaid.nih.gov</a>	74
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation – <a href="http://fhwa.dot.gov">fhwa.dot.gov</a>	73
Treasury	Making Home Affordable – <a href="http://makinghomeaffordable.gov">makinghomeaffordable.gov</a>	73
HHS	National Library of Medicine Clinical Trials website – <a href="http://clinicaltrials.gov">clinicaltrials.gov</a>	73
DOS	Department of State blog website – <a href="http://blogs.state.gov">blogs.state.gov</a>	72
DOI	U.S. Geological Survey – <a href="http://usgs.gov">usgs.gov</a>	72
USDA	FSIS main website – <a href="http://fsis.usda.gov">fsis.usda.gov</a>	72
OPM	OPM Veterans Employment website – <a href="http://fedshirevets.gov">fedshirevets.gov</a>	68
DOC	BEA main website – <a href="http://bea.gov">bea.gov</a>	67
USDA	NRCS website – <a href="http://nrcs.usda.gov">nrcs.usda.gov</a>	67

**Federal News/Information Sites** (continued from page 22)

Dept.	Website	Satisfaction
FDIC	FDIC Applications – www2.fdic.gov	66
Treasury	USTTB website – ttb.gov	66
SSA	Social Security Online: Frequently Asked Questions – ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov	66
Treasury	Financial Stability – financialstability.gov	66
DOD	TRICARE – tricare.mil	64
DOC	U.S. Census Bureau main website – census.gov	62
DOT	DOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration website – rita.dot.gov	62
USDA	Forest Service main website – fs.usda.gov	61
HHS	HHS – grants.gov	60
DOT	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration main website – fmcsa.dot.gov	60

**Federal Portals/Department Main Sites**

The portals/department main sites category scored a 74 for the fourth consecutive quarter. This quarter's website satisfaction scores range from 61 to 87. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website leads the category with an 87. Still rebounding from one of the lowest scores (51) in the Index last quarter, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) gained 10 points for a score of 61.

The GSA (77) and National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (80) also witnessed significant increases of three points over Q3 2012.

The following chart shows the citizen satisfaction scores for all 33 of the federal government department sites in this category.

## Federal Portals/Department Main Sites

Dept.	Website	Satisfaction
Portal and Department Main Sites Aggregate Satisfaction		74
HHS	National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website – nhlbi.nih.gov	87
HHS	National Cancer Institute main website – cancer.gov	83
HHS	CDC main website – cdc.gov	82
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services en Español – uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es	82
NASA	NASA main website – nasa.gov	81
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis	81
DOI	National Park Service main website – nps.gov	80
HHS	National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research – nidcr.nih.gov	80
HHS	NIAMS public website – niams.nih.gov	79
DOJ	FBI main website – fbi.gov	79
GAO	GAO main public website – gao.gov	77
HHS	National Library of Medicine main website – nlm.nih.gov	77
GSA	GSA main website – gsa.gov	77
DOD	Department of Defense portal – defense.gov	76
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website – nist.gov	75
SBA	SBA main website – sba.gov	74
PBGC	U.S. PBGC main website – pbgc.gov	72
ITC	U.S. International Trade Commission main website – usitc.gov	72
HHS	U.S. Food and Drug Administration main website – fda.gov	71
FTC	FTC main website – ftc.gov	71
NARA	NARA main public website – archives.gov	71
DOS	Department of State main website – state.gov	71
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – epa.gov	70
VA	VA Main website – va.gov and myhealthva.gov	70
DHS	Department of Homeland Security main website – dhs.gov	69
FDIC	FDIC main website – fdic.gov	68
HHS	SAMHSA website – samhsa.gov	68
Treasury	IRS main website – irs.gov	67
SSA	Social Security Online (Main Website) – socialsecurity.gov	66
DOT	Federal Railroad Administration main website – fra.dot.gov	64



**Federal Portals/Department Main Sites** (continued from page 24)

Dept.	Website	Satisfaction
Treasury	Treasury main website – treasury.gov	64
DOL	Disability – Disability.gov	63
DHS	Federal Emergency Management Agency main website – fema.gov	61

**Federal Career/Recruitment Sites****Federal Portals/Department Main Sites**

Dept.	Website	Satisfaction
CIA	Recruitment website – cia.gov/careers	82
DOS	Recruitment website – careers.state.gov	82
DOL	Department of Labor Job Listings – doors.dol.gov	77
OPM	Recruitment website – usajobs.gov	73



## WHY SATISFACTION MATTERS

Satisfaction, as measured using the ACSI methodology, has been shown to have a direct impact on citizen's likely future behaviors. If federal government agencies focus on improving their respective website's priority areas, citizen satisfaction with the sites should also improve.

Every quarter in this Index, we compare less-satisfied visitors (with satisfaction scores of 69 or less) to highly satisfied website visitors (with satisfaction scores of 80 or higher) to produce likelihood scores of what citizens will do in the future in terms of participating again, using the site as a primary resource, recommending the site to others, returning to the site, and trusting the agency. Below is a chart that shows the range of satisfaction for each measured future behavior.

Based on likelihood scores, citizens who are highly satisfied with a federal government website rate their trust in the agency 63% higher than do those who are dissatisfied. Satisfied citizens also report being 47% more likely to participate in government by expressing their thoughts to the agency than are citizens who are less satisfied.

Satisfaction also increases the likelihood that the citizen will return to the website again (54%), use it as a primary resource (92%) as opposed to utilizing more costly channels, or recommend the site to others (92%).

#### Why Satisfaction Matters

	Highly Satisfied Citizens (80+)	Dissatisfied Citizens (< 70)	Difference in Scores	The Impact of Higher Website Satisfaction
Future Participation	66	45	47%	Citizens are more likely to participate with and express their thoughts to their government, which strengthens the democratic process and may provide useful feedback.
Return to Site	97	63	54%	Government departments and agencies have an ongoing channel through which they can provide information and services to citizens efficiently and relatively inexpensively.
Recommend Site	96	50	92%	Use of government websites will grow as citizens recommend them to their friends, family and colleagues.
Use Site as Primary Resource	92	48	92%	Cost savings for departments and agencies can result as citizens are right-channeled to web; citizens get information from a credible government source rather than another online/offline source (in cases where options exist, e.g., health-related information).
Trust	91	56	63%	Citizens believe the agency is trustworthy and acting in their best interests, which fosters faith in the democratic process.



These figures illustrate how vital it is to measure the citizen experience. The information here demonstrates technology-driven customer satisfaction analytics that, when done right, can predict site visitors' future behaviors, and the data-driven findings can guide agencies to make improvements that will increase desired citizen behaviors.

High customer satisfaction is clearly important for federal websites, but how do we increase it?

The federal websites in this study also measure a number of website elements, or drivers of satisfaction.

Although there are variations in the set of elements that are relevant to each site, the most common elements are:

- > **Look and Feel:** The visual appeal of the site and its consistency throughout the site.
- > **Navigation:** The organization of the site and options for navigation.
- > **Site Performance:** The speed, consistency, and error-free loading of pages on the website.
- > **Content:** Perceptions of the accuracy, quality and freshness of information on the website.
- > **Search:** The relevance, organization and quality of search results available on the site.
- > **Functionality:** The usefulness, convenient placement and variety of online features and tools available on the website.
- > **Online Transparency:** How thoroughly and quickly the website discloses information about what the agency is doing, as well as how accessible agency information is to citizens.

By measuring these elements, agencies can pinpoint and prioritize areas of improvement from the citizen's perspective leading to increased satisfaction. If federal websites fail to scientifically measure and analyze the results, they will have a hard time making the changes that will enhance their value and usefulness to citizens in a cost-effective manner.

## Common Elements of Satisfaction

Element	What It Measures	Priority for Improvement
Search	The relevance, organization and quality of search results available on the site. (Although this element is not applicable universally, it is often extremely impactful for sites where it is relevant.)	Priority 1 = Top Priority
Functionality	The usefulness, convenience and variety of online features and tools available on the website.	Priority 1 = Top Priority
Online Transparency	How thoroughly, quickly and accessibly the website discloses information about what the agency is doing.	Priority 1 = Top Priority
Navigation	The organization of the site and options for navigation.	Priority 2
Look and Feel	The visual appeal of the site and its consistency throughout the site.	Priority 3
Content	The accuracy, quality and relevancy of news, information and content on the website.	Priority 3
Site Performance	The speed, consistency and reliability of loading pages on the website.	Priority 3



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dave Lewan manages ForeSee's sales organization focused on the public sector, including government departments and agencies, non-profit organizations and higher education institutions. He leads ForeSee's continuing expansion in these markets to help organizations measure and manage the satisfaction of their website visitors. Dave brings more than 20 years of experience with sales, leadership, online strategy, technology and consulting. Most recently, he served as Vice President of Product Marketing and Management at Gevity HR, where he was responsible for the primary leadership and planning force for Gevity's product and solutions strategy. Dave graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Speech Communications.

As President and CEO of ForeSee, Larry is responsible for managing the company's strategy and significant growth since the company's founding in 2001. Larry brings more than 20 years of experience in senior management and in directing ForeSee's e-commerce and technology initiatives. An expert on the cross-channel customer experience and author of *Managing Forward: How to Move From Measuring the Past to Managing the Future*, Larry speaks extensively on the topic at private and public sector industry events and has been quoted in numerous publications and media outlets, including CNN, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Investor's Business Weekly*, *Internet Retailer*, *Multichannel Merchant*, *DM News*, *Computerworld*, *Federal Computer Week* and *Government Executive*, among many others.

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

Julie Anderson, Research Analyst at ForeSee, has over 13 years of consulting and research experience in public and private organizations with a focus on large-scale data analytics. Through her work as a satisfaction research analyst at ForeSee, she has extensive experience with the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) and in providing voice-of-customer analytics with a special focus on digital analytics.

## ABOUT THE ACSI E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX

The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a special quarterly report of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) in partnership with customer experience analytics firm ForeSee.

The ACSI, created at the University of Michigan, is the only uniform, national, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States, both in the private and public sectors. In 1999, the federal government selected the ACSI to be a standard metric for measuring citizen satisfaction. More than 100 federal government agencies have used the ACSI to measure citizen satisfaction with more than 200 services and programs and more than 100 websites. The report on offline federal government services is released annually in December. The E-Government Index is released quarterly.

ForeSee collects and analyzes the data for the e-government websites included in the report. The ACSI e-government scores were calculated based on data gathered from voluntary online surveys of randomly selected site visitors. Each government website was rated by its visitors on various components of overall satisfaction. The ratings were converted to a score on a 100-point scale using the ACSI methodology.

The ACSI methodology identifies key drivers of online satisfaction (such as navigation, look and feel, search, site functionality, etc.) and quantifies their relationship to overall citizen satisfaction. This cause-and-effect methodology demonstrates the impact of website enhancements in these areas on overall customer satisfaction. In turn, customer satisfaction, as measured by the ACSI, has been proven to predict how citizens will behave in the future. Improvements to customer satisfaction will make citizens more likely to choose to interact with an agency online (the more cost-effective channel), return to the site, and recommend it to others. Monitoring and improving customer satisfaction has a tangible impact on citizen usage of the web channel and on the organization's bottom line.

## ABOUT THE ACSI

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is a national economic indicator of customer satisfaction with the quality of products and services available to U.S. consumers. It is updated quarterly with new measures for differing sectors of the economy, building on the previous year's data. The overall ACSI score for a given quarter factors in scores from more than 200 companies in 44 industries, along with scores from government agencies over the previous four quarters. The Index was founded at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business and is produced by ACSI, LLC.

## ABOUT FORESEE

As a pioneer in customer experience analytics, ForeSee continuously measures satisfaction across customer touch points and delivers critical insights on where to prioritize improvements for maximum impact. Because ForeSee's superior technology and proven methodology connect the customer experience to the bottom line, executives and managers are able to drive future success by confidently optimizing the efforts that will achieve business and brand objectives. The result is better business for companies and a better experience for consumers. Visit [www.foresee.com](http://www.foresee.com) for customer experience solutions and original research.